

Know Cottonseed Quality Before Planting

Planting high quality cottonseed is the cornerstone to a successful season. With the current price of most cotton seed and the increased use of precision planting equipment, many producers are reducing seeding rates. Coupled with the fact that we often experience less than optimum conditions at planting, it is critical to have high seedling vigor for good stand establishment. The Cool-Warm Vigor Index is the best method for assessing seed vigor. Information provided by this germination test is not required; therefore it does not appear on the seed tag. However, some seed companies perform this test, and will provide this information upon request. The current information on a bag of cottonseed provides information on viability (germination percentage) conducted under ideal conditions. In some cases seed can have high viability, but have low vigor. The Cool-Warm Vigor Index combines information obtained from the standard Warm Germination Test and a Cool Germination Test. The Texas Department of Agriculture has Seed Laboratories in Giddings, Stephenville and Lubbock that perform this test. Information obtained from the test allows you to make more informed decisions on planting time, and conditions of various seed lots. Seed with the highest possible vigor should be planted earlier in the season or when planting conditions are less than optimum. Lower vigor seed should be planted later in the season when soils have warmed or conditions are more optimum for cotton stand establishment. Since variety selection is the most important decision you make all year (and one of the most expensive), it just makes good sense to know all you can about your seed.